

The Tattler

Summer 2017 Edition

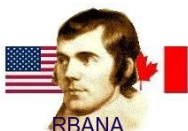
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The Robert Burns Association
of North America

Affiliated with the Robert Burns
World Federation Ltd
Kilmarnock, Scotland
Club #1024

Words from the President

Ah Summertime! That part of the year when our usual Burns activities take a pause, and we go into our tween Conference programs. Those of who have statues, or the like locally prepare for our wreath laying services, and we have our community outreach, be it Haggis on a Bap on Canada Day in Medicine Hat, or information tables at two pavilions during Folklorama here in Winnipeg, or whatever may be going on where you are. Take advantage of the opportunity to spread the word.



It is such a short period of time. In just a few weeks I, and some of you no doubt, are off to renew auld acquaintance at Peebles.

Enjoy your summer.

Yours Aye
Colin Harris
President

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Medicine Hat Hosts RBANA Conference

The 37th Conference and Annual General Meeting of RBANA was held the weekend of April 28 – 30, in the Alberta city of Medicine Hat.

As is the usual practice, the dedicated clutch of golfers teed off at the Desert Blume course, just south of the city on Friday morning, Edmonton Burns Club

President Scott Montgomery triumphing and earning possession of the trophy for the coming year. The executive members who were able to attend, met, Friday afternoon.

The weekend got off to an official start Friday evening with a Ceilidh at the historic Cypress Club.

On Saturday, with most attendees still recovering from a late night, the hardiest of the group embarked

on a tour of the city, under the leadership of City Councillor, and Medicine Hat Burns Club President Bill Cocks. In addition to city land-

mark “the world’s largest teepee,” the tour took in the Burns Bust, the Medalta pottery works, and the museum at the Esplanade Arts Centre.

Following lunch a workshop “Surviving and prospering in the new age” was held, with RBANA Vice President Ken Montgomery, Henry Cairney, President of the Calgary Club, and U S Director Les Strachan offering their ideas.

The AGM followed, with full discussion on the package of amendments to the constitution, before its passage, with some modest changes.

Following the AGM the Executive Board met briefly, and agreed to

fill the long vacant position of Secretary Treasurer with Canadian Director Janet Thompson, of Winnipeg, and to fill the thus created vacancy with Henry Cairney. Coming out of the conference the Board is, for the first time in several years,



Top Left Attendees enjoy entertainment at Ceilidh Top Right Members of the CBC Singers
Bottom Left Federation President Bobby Kane enjoying the Haggis Pizza (Bottom Left)



Left : The TarTones Entertain



Right Scott Montgomery accepts Golf trophy from Alex Crawley

Medicine Hat Conference (continued)

at full complement.

The Jim Connor Memorial Quiz followed the AGM, and to know one's surprise, previous winner Leslie Strachan (below) won top marks once again. The weekend wrapped up in style, with the Saturday evening banquet.

Ably compered by Craig Elder, Medicine Hat Past President, those in attendance enjoyed a four



course meal, intermingled with entertainment by Highland Dancers, and members of the Calgary Burns Club Singers.

Canadian Director Andy Harrower delivered a memorable Address to the Haggis.

Following the loyal toasts to the two Heads of State, and entertainment by members of the South Alberta Pipes & Drums, Presidents Bobby Kane, and Colin Harris brought greetings.

Medicine Hat Mens Ensemble, The TarTones entertained before Burns Federation Past President,



and Ambassador Jane Brown (left) proposed the Toast to the Immortal Memory, which did not disappoint.

Next year we shall convene in Philadelphia

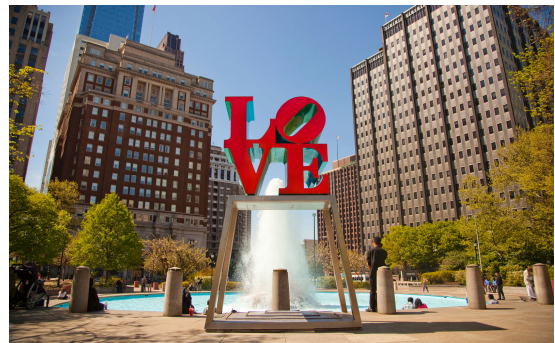
RBANA 2018 Set For Philadelphia

RBANA Conference 2018 will be held in Philadelphia over the weekend of April 20 -21.

Mark your calendar for this one as it promises to be a grand time.

The committee have negotiated a great rate for a full service city center hotel, the Courtyard Marriott, with large rooms and right in the very heart of everything, easy walking distance to restaurants, market-places, bars and all the historical sites.

Philadelphia was the site of Robert Burns



First US edition of his poems in 1788 , and the building still stands where it was published, albeit an Irish Pub!

Philly, the City of Brotherly Love, is the 6th largest city in the US with easy access from everywhere, 8 miles to the airport and trains available to city center, only an hour by train to Washington DC and less to NYC. Make your plans now.

More information on registration will follow.

The committee is actively seeking Gold and Silver Sponsorship opportunities. Please feel free to contact Les Strachan or Bill Fulton the Co-Chairs for any additional information they can be reached by email at RBANA2018 @ aol.com

Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy Winner

The winner of the second annual Jack Hume Heather & Thistle Trophy, for poetry writing, in the style of Burns, was announced at the RBANA Conference in Medicine Hat.

Judged by a three person panel, including last year's winner Ronnie O'Byrne, Jack Hume, of Houston, and Willie Gibson of Scotland, the chosen entry, on the right, was from Jim Fletcher of the Halifax Burns Club. (Pictured Below with the Trophy)



An Epitaph to Robert Burns on His 258th Birthday, January 25th, 2017

“Stop, passenger,” take time to pause
at any bronze of this man.
Relax, and wonder at the laws
he bids us reminisce, man.

He's found in New York City's Central Park
and London by Thames, man,
and Aberdeen and Adelaide.
There're many of these gems, man.

No nation's crown or creed required
his likeness to be traced man,
and of sorrow when we part,
and joy when we unite man.

The kings of greed, with new world pow'r,
would hurry past this place man.
Here reigns a force from which they cow'r:
Humanity and Grace, man.

If decency and dignity
are compass for your fate, man,
rest here and sense serenity,
for Robert was a great man.

And in his words, from verses run
to eulogize a bright one:
“...His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless, Heavenly light, man.”

Jane Retires From The Globe

As we were preparing to this edition we learned that the long-serving manager of an iconic Dumfries pub is retiring after more than 20 years at the helm. Burns Federation Past President, and good friend of RBANA, Jane Brown has been managing Robert Burns' favourite watering hole, The Globe Inn, since 1997.

Not only has she overseen the staff and the bar, she has also run tours of the pub's museum and revealed the Bard's history to thousands of Burns enthusiasts from across the world. Jane said: "The Globe has given me a wonderful career. It's been an absolute joy.

"I moved to Dumfries in 1985 when I was divorced with two wee kids. I had five jobs in 12 years, one of which was part-time in the Globe, and when I took over the management here I couldn't have been happier."

Jane is one of only two women to be made honorary



members of the Burns Howff Club (the other, the Globe's Landlady Maureen McKerrow). Her role as Federation President saw her travel all over the world spreading the word of his work, the Globe and Dumfries. She continues to travel, including the recent RBANA Conference in Medicine Hat.

The Sanquhar-born Jean told the local Dumfries newspaper: "I loved Burns at school but working in the Globe really pushed that on.

"The Burns fraternity is wonderful and the Globe is a huge part of that."

One of Jane's favourite parts of the job was never knowing which Burnsian would walk through the 400-year-old doors next. She related a story of a woman from Japan who came in unannounced, with a camera

crew playing, Auld Lang Syne on a violin.

"Singing would start impromptu all the time when someone brought a guitar out. That's what makes this place so special.

Thomas Miller 1928-2017

We were saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Tommy Miller, of the Calgary Burns Club on June 13, 2017 at the age of 88 years.

Long time members of RBANA will recall Tommy as a regular at conferences in past years.

Tom was born in Glasgow, Scotland where he met his first wife and they had a daughter, Evelyn. After the passing of his first wife, Tom married his second wife Kathleen and had two additional children, Steven and Anne. Shortly after, the young family immigrated to Canada and settled in Toronto. After 12 years in Toronto the family moved west to Calgary and made it their permanent home. Tom was actively involved with the Toast-



masters, was a lifetime member and past president of the Calgary Burns Club and a member of the Kensington Legion. It was at the Burns Club and the Legion where Tom met some of his best friends. He

enjoyed his time singing and travelling with the choir and cherished his time with so many wonderful friends.

Tom is survived by his daughters, Evelyn Seggie of PEI, Anne and son-in-law, Lawrence Harnesk of Ardrossan, AB; son, Steve Miller of Aurora, ON; a number of grandchildren, great-grandchildren and numerous family in Canada and Scotland.

Tom was predeceased by his first wife of 5 years Annie Miller (nee Hendry) and later

by his second wife of 34 years Kathleen Miller (nee Grant) and grandson, Shawn Seggie.

Schoolchildren Perform Scottish Opera Based On Tam O'Shanter

Thousands of young schoolchildren around Scotland have had the opportunity over the past few months to perform along with Scottish Opera in The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter, an opera, written especially for children in primaries 5, 6 and 7. The fast-paced adventure features original lyrics by Ross Stenhouse and music by Karen MacIver.

As with the original work, the show, created to re-introduce young people to the works of the celebrated Scottish poet, follows a farmer named Tam o' Shanter as he makes his way home from market day with his faithful horse Meg. As the night grows darker, the rain falls and the wind shrieks through the branches of the trees, he finds himself outside the church where he discovers a coven of witches dancing. Fascinated, Tam stops to watch, but suddenly one of them spots him, and he and Meg

must run for their lives.

Schools are provided with high quality teaching resources to help introduce the songs to pupils in advance, then a team of Scottish Opera performers and arts education specialists will spend a day rehearsing



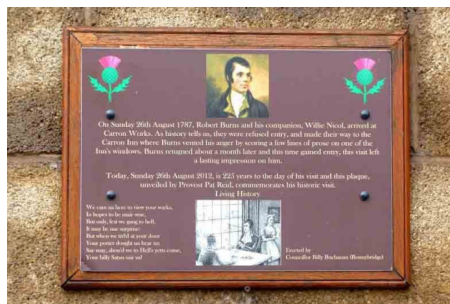
the pupils for a choreographed, fully-costumed performance for family and friends. Scottish Opera's Director of Outreach and Education, Jane Davidson said: "Our children's operas make learning both enjoyable and challenging, giving pupils the opportunity to participate in a high-quality, day-long music theatre workshop that ends with

a performance for parents and guests. Originally commissioned in 2002, this vibrant interpretation of Burns' iconic poem enables a new generation to explore the culture, identity and language that remain key to the enduring appeal of Scotland's most famous poet."

Plaque Returned After Mysterious Disappearance

A plaque commemorating a historic visit to the Falkirk area by iconic poet Robert Burns which disappeared is now back in its rightful place. The commemoration was placed on the clock tower of the Carron Works in 2012 as a tribute led by Baillie Billy Buchanan to Scotland's Bard's visit to the site on August 26, 1787, with companion Willie Nicol. The trip has been well documented historically as he was refused entry at the main gate where the clock tower stands

today. However, the plaque to remember the event mysteriously disappeared in January, but it turned up at the site and has now been placed back on the clock tower's face. Historian Brian Watters, who reinstated the plaque on the wall, said: "Shortly after the article appeared in The Falkirk Herald, a friend of mine Alan Comrie was out cycling and spotted it at the metal railing at the gun display. I think maybe someone's conscience



was stirred."

Rudoldstadt Festival in Germany Focuses On Scotland – Including Tribute To Robert Burns

One of Europe's largest festivals is to reel to the sounds of Scotland this summer, it has emerged.

Bishopbriggs' Amy Macdonald, who has just released her fourth studio album *Under Stars*, is amongst the acts selected to play Rudoldstadt Festival in Germany in July.

Macdonald, who has sold nine million records worldwide, will be amongst the headliners as the annual party makes Scotland its "country of focus" for 2017.

The three-day event has also invited award-winning outfit Breabach, piper and composer Fred Morrison, electronic-Celtic fusion act Niteworks and folk singer Mairi Campbell to perform at a special showcase.

As well as Gaelic song and traditional sounds, the festival, which focuses on world music, will host numerous one-off events including an international tribute to the works of Robert Burns.

A Man for A' That will feature artists from Ethiopia, Lapland, Georgia, Israel, Jamaica, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Germany, India and Spain. Participants will deliver Burns works in their native languages and come together for a performance produced by Fred Freeman of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Alan Morrison, head of music at Creative Scotland, said: "The musicians invited to Rudoldstadt will be bringing the best of what Scotland has to offer, from the piping virtuosity of Fred Morrison to the electro rhythms of Niteworks.

"Germany has for years been a strong supporter

of Scottish music and so we are delighted to take this relationship further.

"After all, it was the German Echo Awards that recognised Amy Macdonald as Best International Newcomer in 2009, which makes her headline slot this year all the sweeter.

"The programme taps into the musical glories of Scotland's past – its travellers' songs, Gaelic archives and Burns's favourites – all made vibrant and relevant for audiences today, as our deepest traditions are carried on into the future. What bet-

ter way to extend a hand of cultural friendship than this?"

Mike Kamp, the curator of the festival's country of focus, said: "Scotland has an ideal environment for folk music – very deep roots, continuous support for traditional music, and building on this an incredibly creative, receptive scene."

Commenting on the news, Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said:

"Scotland and Germany enjoy a special relationship, which dates to 1297 when William Wallace wrote to the mayors of Lübeck and Hamburg declaring Scotland open for business.

"Our prominence at the festival is an excellent opportunity to showcase the spirit of Scotland, as we celebrate our Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology.

"We hope the spotlight on Scotland will entice music lovers to our own plethora of music festivals, which take place across the country throughout the summer months."



Bench Christened To Celebrate Bard's Visit To Moray

Those attending the Burns Federation Conference in Peebles, and are planning a trip north while they are there may be interested to know that a visit to a scenic viewpoint by one of Scotland's most famous names has been commemorated with a bench.

Robert Burns stopped in Elgin, Moray during an exhausting tour of the country in 1787 to raise money from his poetry.

During the visit, the Bard wrote in his diary about the spectacular vista from the top of the town's Lady Hill. Of particular interest to the writer was the "magnificent" cathedral, despite the grand structure already being in ruins in the 18th Century.

Now Elgin's Burns Club and the Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere project have christened a bench to replicate the view the poet would have enjoyed. The bench features intricate designs of some of the town's most famous buildings, including the cathedral. Donald Lunan, (right) President of the Burns Club, said: "During his visit to Elgin he had already become a bit of a national celebrity, he was quite a well-known character.

"He went on one or two tours seeking patrons to fund his work and wealthy families in the area would be happy to entertain him.

"He passed through Elgin on his way to Fochabers and he was very impressed with the cathedral.

"We don't know for sure what view Burns would have had of the town but we like to think he went to the top of Lady Hill and this is a nice way to commemorate it."

The new bench was christened by actors portraying Burns and his travelling companion Willie Nicol sharing a dram at the summit.

In the coming weeks information boards will be erected on the hill to provide information about the town and the castle that once stood at the summit.

Jim Royan, chairman of Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere, said: "The history of Lady Hill goes all the way back to the medieval days.

"Nobody knows for sure what the castle would have looked like but it

wouldn't have been built for show, it would have had a purpose.

"In its day it was very much the Balmoral of its time, where royalty came for hunting and shooting experiences."

